

Bard

Bard College
Bard Digital Commons

Robert Kelly Manuscripts

Robert Kelly Archive

4-2002

aprD2002

Robert Kelly
Bard College

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts

Recommended Citation

Kelly, Robert, "aprD2002" (2002). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. Paper 943.
http://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts/943

This Manuscript is brought to you for free and open access by the Robert Kelly Archive at Bard Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Robert Kelly Manuscripts by an authorized administrator of Bard Digital Commons. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@bard.edu.

Bard

THE CONCEALMENT OF THE TOUR SAINT-JACQUES

Dream sketch a structure placed
situations violent words a spate
of difference

cereal goddess

frumentum edge of corn

writing through maximal insertion
a woven roof over a bleak meaning

to touch her again somehow
spite all the dying between names

it has begun again the raft is leaking
leverage among cherry trees

a *mas*

apart ocher terebinth and true
resistance is the only honesty

a lap

vacant to its proper hunch nibble
broiderie of Greek idea

on the old steps

of the arena an Arab was singing to his wife
Roman steps the church of all the poor
is music and it lets us breathe

for we know weather we are experts

in the sealed faces of pedestrians
all taking and no giving

museum

arcane things hidden in the chest
all faces sealed the alchemy of fear

they come to look and not be seen
augment sensory input potential
walking down the street the cool crowd a falcon
sits on the steeple of you
your own business a coat taken off
no shirt no heraldry to speak
a particular

no identity offered to the passerby

Saint James's Tower is sheathed in scaffolding
penis in rushes word lost in reeds

they have wrapped the magic tower
to save it from our pilgrim eyes
tourists of the mystical city
we always move through
no matter what wastes of sand or sidewalks
the argument of our desire
strips the city bare

everyone we see clear

the black cat slouches home to its bookstore

we are pilgrims also of a simple need

2.

sit here on this stone
a she stone
here from the beginning of the world
a she pilaster
barely a century old
of plaster slapped against a burgher's wall

drunken sky
to die over a whole language
lost,
what we came to teach you
is resist

street of no shoes
leading up the vineyard
hill of some newfangled god
whose priests like to leap on women

a syriac inscription and
a pediment some revolt defaced
the whole body smashed away
and only
the place

leave the place for us
to gospel and malingering
hard benches and inveigling prose

desiring you
in holy torture

lifting to my instrument a skill
unparalleled in feeling
all emerging
from the absent ocean

a horn call,
a horn call dying away
you're not sure you really heard

a sound
threaded through the town the tower
net to catch sense

3.
wisdom built her house of olive pits and wine
and now a one that had once been me
is said to sleep inside the portico she made
heavy under heaven and a dog keeps barking
this man this man was me was me

4.
I want to wait for you again in mastery
of all the heavy uniforms the heart has on
aluminum crown of a foolish king

light one match in a dank cellar
up the winding stairs
to tables fully set for formal dinners
in an empty room, there are no diners,
silken flowers, paper napkins,
everything is finished and the air is cool

I walk between the tables knowing only
where each will sit when her time comes.

15 April 2002, Paris

Edge of streets new asphaltum old
cobblestones *kiefer* jaws the muscles
hold my words together till you heard
the day is going
hard under soft
going is our permanent condition
I think I think
and you? Go there and be here.

15 April 2002

Paris

RUE DES ÉCOLES

All my life I have been here.

Which country how long I have been living
near enough to this corner to arrive in the middle of the night
over and over and call it a life, what in America
we call a block and you call a paste of houses

a mound heaped of going.

We are soldiers against the plainness of unlooking
against the muddle memory against the trivial
against the quadrivial. Here in the Sorbonne.

Always for the other. The imaginary ultimate.
What's worrying the sparrow now a chip of bread.

15 April 2002

Paris

Everything resembles. Everything
brings something else to mind.
Is this a wonder. Or a horror.
Things are the gateways
to other things
forever,
no repose
of being like something other than yourself.
And no repose of being yourself.

15 April 2002
Paris

SMOG, BERCY

Worse the
further you go north.
Bobigny
of the great shame.
By Roissy
a plague of throat.

The beautiful smog
eye's delight. Eliot,
Pound, the old
Paris of exile and arriviste.
The joke is always
on you, the stay-at-home,
the local success, man
with a bowling alley mind.

2.

It is worth it, this.
Derangement of the obvious.
The girls of Indiana
are waiting for you
and here we can hardly
see the planes. But here
is here, a miracle
of smog and cruelty
as if the street

could strike you
harder even than the light.
But be here.

3.

Pretend I don't speak English.
Or French or any
language. Then explain
yourself to me
clearly and slowly.
Who you are. Who you think
I am. Who I really
Am. Use your hands.
Why we are together
talking or not talking.
Explain. Pretend
I don't even hear.
Pretend those gentle little
mewing noises (seagull
not so far) you keep
giving pass me by,
breath in the hairs of my chest,
you little breeze, you, you
valid valorous discourser.

16 April 2002

Roissy

AIRPLANE

The shrill soft music
they pipe into the cabin

two hundred anxieties
waiting for the sky

each passenger
hears a different tune

the national anthem
of our own death.

16 April 2002

HEATHROW

Resting on a little island
that decided to rule the world
did a while then got tired of it

come as you are. The sky
for example is blue, today
I'm wearing shoes
and everything in between

is dressed correctly
for the occasion.
The world is a church,
be decent, show your breeding

every word was in a body once
and needs to find its way home.

16 April 2002

London

Why do they want to take away the spool
and leave the thread, tangled and stretched
over the window gap, wind shoves it
forth and back avid for release from form
into what is on the other side of order

where figure skaters scratch nice icons in the ice
as if writing were ever the answer to anything
and you could do it with your legs, your whole body
thinks out a message to the world and scrawls it
the way people in summer step over a sleeping dog

on their way into some airless old store along the road
where there is someone waiting for each one of them.

16 April 2002

in flight, London-New York

WARM

Warm by the fish tank.

Pink. Long blues, small silvers.

And their ferns. Their phony
rocks that work as well as genuine.

There is no difference in the real.

17 April 2002

DELACROIX

Home to 91 degree weather and a slim new moon
bright shell lying on the Rhinebeck sky.
How empty American spaces are
millions of acres of *contemplation land*
beside our highways, monks reborn as young trees,
joyful renunciates, monasteries of absence.

Beauty is the empty palette, the yearning canvas.

2.

On Delacroix's palette preserved in his museum
we see neat dabs of color, ordered, symmetrical.
Could they really be his, that sketchy wildman
for whom the first gesture was the truest,
and finish was the end of things? We love
his disorder, the vague abstention of his Magdalen
drifting into death in the wilderness, or is it sleep
after not the most satisfactory making of love?
In America we all are Delacroix – strong impulse
often stilled (stifled) in the finishing.
We live in sketches – God bless us!

17 April 2002

FROM PARIS

Disheveled night. Spectacle. The random lights
of cars derange the intelligent dark. It pieces
itself together. How all the Arabs sending dubious
e-mails at midnight from the computer saloons
on the Boulevard Sebastopol do not finally
use up all our words. How the pale
malingering armies of the earth sullenly in hate
with each other their own selves do not finally
extinguish the twinkling even of the most modest
star, negative values indicate brightness there,
your hand has been waiting all week for a letter
from mine it may not yet know how to read
but it can stroke, quietly, as it lies in your lap.
We caress the surfaces of things. Enough
for this cycle of our dear lives. Later
we will come to understand the thing we touched.

17 April 2002

DECALAGE HORAIRE

So we are still alive, still awake, the old firm
still pursuing its erotic business
at the venue of the moon. They all came back
to me last night, and French infantrymen
proposed to billet in my house,
my quite large house, magnificence of space.
And you too, my dear, came back, tender
in your camel coat, your tell-tale make up,
the blood of Orpheus beautiful on your lips.
Still so soft they surprise me every time.
You had become a *bonne*, a nursemaid
to make yourself simple, you said, and I
at last was part of your spiritual path.
Outside the army waited. The hardware
didn't work, so I went to get my brother
who speaks better French. This is my
place and I don't want soldiers in it,
just you. We walked around the lofty rooms
remembering. Sometimes I was me
and sometimes just some book you were reading
while you waited for me to come back.
Or for anybody awake in all this talk.

17 April 2002

WOODPECKER

knows where

they are.

or in a tree root a vector

a word once fashionable

gone to sleep in what it thinks it means

nothing more deadening than denotation

worm gorging on its robin. Know me

is a doctor of ontology, the reason

we would create the condition of another

that special presence called The Other

the one who invites me to the dance.

Woodpecker

finials eroded the shaft

penetrated with alternative (the Other's)
designs.

Holes in my head
to take you in.

Amor picus, love's a hammer
also, an awl from the sky.

This is called the desert

the place where there is nothing
just our perceptions

we people you, valley.
Only there is no we. The pierce
is real, the wound

defines the man. Or where the man
would be if he were wood
or bone or meat

and if I were.
Rigorous logic of being.
It is alive if it feels pain.

How much credit do we give the stimulus,
porcupine theology,
hurt them to be.

Chain dance of meek perceivers,
balustrade of the eyes, my musketeers.
I have come home to all of you,
a pretty girl hidden in my cock

the mowers come to interpret the evidence
in their roaring we lose the point (no we,
no me, only you, you are the one)
rigorous consequence of blues

slapshot across the willing eyes.
You fall for me, fall down for my sake,
slide into the sitting posture
leaning on the mountain wall
the stiff banquette of boring restaurants
you wait for me, there is always
a you to make the next thing happen.

Of course in images the story tells
as if something ever happens.
The princess sits in the stream
discussing logic with the current,
waiting to be rescued by the dragon
himself bored with all his golden life.
The reifications of love. Give me
this hour and what comes with it,
the movement and the stillness,
how quick you are to be at peace.

Nobody happens. The svelte
costume you wore to welcome
me as if you laid your body in my arms
and told me the secret mountaintop
where we always are. A stone
is a story. The two moons
of your city, always more
to you than the eye can meet,
the gentlest touch opens every gate.

Cities, moons, mountains, stones.
Everything comes back to us knowing
where we have been. And nothing
happens. Woven into each other
we endure the separations of the cloth.
Tissue, text, I love you like a city,
but a city I am always leaving.

Sun on the nape of my neck. Your neck.
I imagine that's a story too
but will it ever happen. Is it just
a tantrum on the telephone,
an evening of giving everything
that yields nothing, then suddenly
it's morning and everything is true
after all. You, you. All the gods
and Hellases, all the bright distinctions.
Accurate words, a little food,
water and we are opulent enough.

Cats, cars, a different racket,
leafy square, some flowers,
the shadowed doorway of the hospital
closed now, no room for sickness,
the glaring windows of our neurology
have taken in too much light,
too much action. Sun struck,
too many syllables only one you.

18 April 2002

